

4.

The Fifth

# SERMON

Preach'd before the

## King and Queen,

IN

Their MAJESTIES Chappel at  
St. James's, upon the FEAST of  
S. Francis Sales, Jan. 29. 168*½*

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Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

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THE BIBLE

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NEW TESTAMENT

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APPROVED BIBLE

BY THE REV. DR. J. H. ELLIOTT, Monk  
OF THE HIGH ORDER OF ST. BERNARD, PRIOR OF THE ABBEY OF  
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Approved by the Diocesan Authorities Committee

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THE FIFTH

## SERMON

Preach'd before

THEIR MAJESTIES,

On the Feast of S. Francis Sales,

Jan. 29. 1685.

Talis decebat ut esset nobis Pontifex,  
sanctus, innocens. *Hebr. cb. 7, v. 26.*

*It was fitting we shou'd have such a Bishop,  
holy, and innocent.*

 These words are part of that Divine Character which the Apostle gives of Jesus Christ, the Supreme Pastor and Bishop of our Souls, distinguishing him from the

A 3      High

High Priests of the Levitical Race, and establishing his eternal Priesthood according to the Order of *Melchisedec, Sanctus, Innocens.* For, as it was fitting that a new Law-giver shou'd publish a new Law; so was it necessary he shou'd create a new Priesthood, more perfect then the former, more excellent, not only in Power and Efficacy, but also in *Sanctity* and *Innocence.* And since this Law was to be so consummated in all Points, that it shou'd never be repeal'd or excluded by a posterior Law more perfect then it self; so was it fitting *we shou'd have such a Bishop*, so replenish'd with Holiness and Innocence, as all who were to succeed him in the Pontifical Dignity, and Direction of Souls, might abundantly *receive of his fulness*, and *some in every Age shou'd actually enjoy a larger, and more conspicuous share of his Holiness and Innocence.*

Of this number was the eminent Prelate, to the memory of whose *innocent* Life,

Life, and *holy* Conversation, the Church has appointed the present Solemnity. A Bishop so holy and innocent, that, as he was the *glory*, so is he the *reproach* of this corrupt Age. For if the worst of Times, and the most barren Soil, cou'd produce Innocence, and nourish Holiness, and bring Virtue to the highest Maturity, how fond, and frivolous are our Excuses? how do's our Justification aggravate our Offence, when we strive to lay our own Burthen upon our Neighbours Shoulders, and charge our voluntary Depravations upon the *Iniquity of the Times*? But I argue wrong: For since we are so ready to catch at every shadow of an Excuse, to palliate our Vices, and to shelter our Cowardice, not daring to offer at a good Life, or desparding, and falling back as soon as we have made the first step; therefore, ~~such a~~ <sup>such a</sup> Bishop ~~should~~ <sup>will</sup> offer; it was fitting we should have such a Pastor to guide us, such a Conqueror to lead us on, such an Bishop to encourage us, such

such a Doctor to teach us, and such an Orator to perswade us, that the Land of Promise is not so inaccessible as false Spies represent it, that the Inhabitants are not inhospitable, that Sanctity, and Innocence are not such impracticable Vertues as the World woud have us believe. We have it from his *Doctrine*, we have it from his *Practice*; we cannot find a more faithful Account of it then in his *Writings*, nor can we in reason exact a more authentick Testimony then his *Life*, which mutually support, and witness to one another; his *Life* was holy and innocent, because conformable to his *Doctrine*; and his *Doctrine* is prov'd to be so, because attested by his *Life*. They who admire the sublimeness of his Instructions, when they read them, will find them not above their own *level*, when they see him practise them and such as despair of rising to that *height*, when they read his Performances, will be convinc'd, when they consult his *Rules*, that  
every

every honest State of Life is capable of perfection, that is, of Sanctity and Innocence. *Facere & Docere*, Acting and Teaching was the two-fold Innocence, the two-fold Sanctity of this Holy Man, and therefore shall make the two Parts of this Discourse, after we have begg'd light from above by the Intercession of the Mother of Innocence, Addressing to her more then Angelical Purity, with the Angelical Salutation, *AVE MARIA.*

*It was fitting we shou'd have such a Bishop, Holy, and Innocent.*

CONTR **I** Will not trouble you with the Scholastick Distinctions betwixt Holiness and Innocence, or involve you in the Niceties of the Moral Philosopher, when he marks out the Boundaries of each Virtue, and declares the difference and property: for tho' indeed Innocence import nothing positive as to the force of the word, but only an exemption from Crime, and is distinguish'd from Holiness,

as the *Disposition* from the *Effect*; or at the most, innocence being but an imperfect Holiness, as Holiness is the perfection of Innocence; yet because the common notion which Men have of this vertue, implies *a purity of body and mind*. I am willing to leave you in possession of that Idea, which the Saint favours in his writings, and proceed to shew how eminently he posses'd it in his Person.

And to begin with the inferiour part, the Body, following the Apostles method, *primum est quod animale*: the Spiritual Innocence being never so illustrious, as when it is superstructed upon the Corporal.

But not to mention the previous Dispositions to it, as the Piety and Sanctity of his holy Parents; for tho' other Vertues are not transmitted, yet Innocence, and Chastity seem to be priviledg'd above the rest: Not to draw any Argument from the Angelical meekness of his Countenance,

nance, or Modesty of his behaviour, before Nature began to breath, or Concupiscence to exert it self; we will represent him *ex puerō virūm*, in the bloom of Youth, in the pride of Nature, in the luster of a most perfect Beauty, in the midst of abundance of Health, Nobility, Riches, and by consequence of Temptations: And being thus Nobly attended you may expect to find him in the Courts of Princes, the Sea whence all Greatness flows, and whether naturally it returns; being likewise so dangerously attended, you may expect to meet him at the Comedy, or at the Ball, or at the ordinary *haunts* of Youth; Youth which seems to receive the Blessings of God only to pervert them into the Occasions of sin, having much Health, much Time, much Money to lavish, and in every action stands responsible to God for a *threefold* prodigality of his Favours. A Truth that made so deep, and so *early* an impression upon our young Saint, that he was resolv'd to be before hand with Nature,

and not to quit the possession of *Innocence*,  
for the hazard of a future Repentance.

He then possest what he afterwards left  
in Writing for our instruction, that Chas-  
tity is that holiness of Life, mention'd  
by the Apostle, without which none shall  
see God, as St. *Jerom* and St. *John Chrysost.*  
expound. He had learn'd from the same  
Apostle that *we are not our own, sed ejus,*  
*qui pro nobis mortuus est, & surrexit*, but  
have pass'd away our Title, and render'd  
the possession of our selves to *Jesus Christ*,  
whose glorious Body (if the Apostles Ar-  
gument hath any force) is not only a  
proof of our future immortality, but is  
also an emblem of the present incorrupti-  
on he requires at our hands, and which  
we promised in our Baptism, *to be holy in*  
*Body and Spirit*, that is innocent. He  
had learn'd that his Body must either be  
the *Temple of the Holy Ghost*, or a *Den of*  
*Serpents*: If the Temple of the Holy Ghost,  
then Chastity, and Innocence must be the  
Priest, and Concupiscence the Sacrifice,  
cuius

*cujus templi sacerdos, & sacrificatrix est pudicitia*; and therefore making a vigorous effort in the very flower of his Youth, he gave the Victim a mortal blow, and laid it dead at the foot of the Altar by a vow of perpetual Chastity: And the grace that enabled him to make this *holocaust* of himself, did so constantly attend him all the rest of his Life, that neither the heat of Youth cou'd ever sully the whiteness of the Lilly, nor the most wily Stratagems of the Devil damp the Odour, nor the more rude assaults of the World shake the firmness.

Methinks I behold him in the posture of the *Cherubin* that was plac'd at the entry of Paradise to render it inaccessible to sin. He had *Wings* to fly, and a *Flaming Sword* to resist; thus doubly Armed he stands *Sentinel* to Guard the *Tree of Life*, his *Innocence*; watchful to Defend all the *Avenues*, his *Senses*; least *death shou'd enter through those Windows*. If the *Enemy* Attaque him by open force, (as he did

more

more then once by Perswasions of corrupt Men, and by the importunities of abandon'd Woman) he uses the *Sword of his Zeal*, either putting the Tempters to flight, or subduing them to Repentance. But if the Emissaries of Hell press so hard upon him that Nature inclines to take Quarter, he will not hazard the day by fighting it out, but conquers by his *Wings*; he flies and overcomes, as the chaste and innocent *Joseph* did, of whom St. *Basil of Seleucia* says, *fugâ utitur pro armis*, his defence was in his flight, and he was truly brave because he had the courage to run away. And now he returns cover'd with Glory, that is in *secure possession of Innocence*, to reproach on the one side our *Cowardice*, on the other our *Rashness*, and *Presumption*: Our Cowardice, that we dare not so much as grasp at *a virtue which makes us*, says he, *almost equal to the Angels*, and without which we cannot be *Men*: Our presumption, that we dare, *like the simple Insect* hover curiously about the flame to try whe-

*whether it be as sweet as it is fair, till w  
perish in the very trial.* For if he that loves  
danger shall perish in it; he that goes to  
meet it, loves it; he who does not remove  
the Occasion from his own doors, laies  
a snare for his own Feet; he who does not  
eject the Scandal from under his Roof,  
and lodg it beyond the reach of a ground-  
ed suspition, laies a Snare for the Feet  
of his Neighbour; and he who does not  
fly from the Net when it is spread in his  
way, is already caught.

I have insisted longer upon this  
ground-work of Vertue, then perhaps the  
rules of Panegyricks will allow; but the  
*necessities* of my Auditory, the *force* of  
my Text, and the *honour* of this Saint re-  
quired no less; an uncorrupted, and in-  
violate Chastity, being so necessary a  
foundation to a consummated Innocence,  
that without it the whole Fabrick is ru-  
inous, wants the strength, symmetry, and  
beauty of a regular building, is always  
sinking and yielding, tho' never so often  
repair'd by acts of Repentance.      But

But let us proceed from the cause to the effect, or rather from one link of the Chain to an other; let us contemplate the purity of the Water that flows from so incorrupted a Spring, preaching issuing from Practice; Innocence, teaching Holiness;

Your attention, and my Second Part.

Part. II. If Innocence be the characteristical Vertue of the Saint and shines in every action which he did; it flashes in every Line which he writes: If it was the Soul which animated his Works, it was the Intelligence which dictated his Words, and as a *great Saint* speaks of a perfect Religious man, *vita ejus erat sermo facti ejus*, the purity of his Doctrine is only an account of the purity of his Life, and both together only one continued, uninterrupted series of a *Practical*, and an *Affective* Innocence. If we regard his Life, we shall find it so estranged from the World, as if he knew it not: But if we

look

look upon his Writings, we shall find there so dismal, and yet so exact an account of it, as if he had Travelled thro' all its corruptions. He knew it therefore only to condemn it, and like *Moses* from the top of Mount *Nebo* took a view of that Country he was never to enjoy. God having reserv'd for him *a better hope*; yet not taking the present possession out of his hands, but keeping it from his Heart. He did not call him into the frightful desert with a *St. Paul*, a *St. Anthony*, a *St. Bennet*; he did not Command him to Sell all, and give to the Poor, with a *St. Francis*. The Divine wisdom knew very Well that in an age, so enervated, and softened with ease, and Luxury, *few wou'd take that word*, which in the best of us begets only a sterl admiration; and by the most is look'd upon as so impracticable, that it is hardly credible. For tho' we are expell'd Paradise, yet we expect God should converse with us as before *in our own likeness*; we are ashay'd to embrace

a Vertue that is not in a fashionable dress, and if that great Queen wou'd have us follow her, she must appear in her natural Garb, and easie Way, in fine Linnen and soft Garments; as she was habited before sinners forced her to put on Sack-cloth.

Wherefore the Divine goodness condescending to our infirmity, and (as the  
 Esa. 10.27. Prophet speaks) *softening the Yoke by abundance of Oyl*, sets a Pattern of Holiness before our Eyes in the Person of St. Francis Sales, so easie to Imitate, and Copy out, so adapted to all states, and conditions, that it flashes like light in  
 Pf. 19. 7. every ones Face, *nec est qui se abscondat à calore ejus*, and breaths such a gentle warmth upon every Heart; that we are blind, if we do not see it; that we are insensible if we do not feel it; and inexcusable if we do not follow it.

If I should propose to the Nobility the Example of a *Paulinus*, or a *Cassiodorus*, suing

suing to be discharg'd of their Honours and Imployments , as so many Fetter's, and Impediments in their way to Heaven ; I might disgust, but should never perswade: But when I bring evidence that *Greatness* in this World is not inconsistent with *Humility*, and to serve your King and Country in the most eminent stations excludes neither *Sanctity* nor *Innocence*, why do you not imitate ?

If I should propose to the Courtier the Example of an *Arsenius* crying to you as the unknown voice did to him, *si vis salvus esse fuge* : If you wou'd be saved flic into Solitude, and hide your self in the covert of a Rock, you wou'd think I deserve that desert whether I invite you. But while my Saint commands me to tell you, that your estate is not *desperate*, tho' it be dangerous, and that the Lilly may florish among Thorns, that you may be Innocent in the midst of Corruption, why do you abandon your selves as those that have no hope ?

If I shou'd propose to the Ladies a *Paula* melting in a continual stream of Tears, a *Magdalen* in her Grott, a *Mary of Ægypt* feeding upon Roots, a *Francisca* covered with Sack-cloth, and add to it, *hoc fac, & vives*, this you must do to be Saved; I shou'd turn this Chappel into a valley of *Tophet*, the Preachers voice wou'd be drown'd with execrations upon his head, and acts of despair wou'd eccho from every Breast.

St. Franc. *Sales* directs all his Instructions in the Book of the *Introduction to a Devout life*, to every pious Soul under the name of *Philothaea*. But while my Saint commands me to set before your Eyes a *Philothaea* nobly Born, nicely Bred, easie and gentle in her Behaviour, neither scrupling a decency in Cloaths, nor in Attendance, allowing her self an inoffensive cheerfulness in Discourse, and other Recreations not unbeseeming either her Sex, or Condition, and all this without any prejudice to her Innocence, reflection upon her Reputation or impediment to her Sanctity; what colour

colour of excuse is left you to cover that of your Confusion? Why are you not merry without dissolution, affable without effrontery, gentle without profuseness? Such was *Philothea*. She allows you Visits, and Recreations; but not at the expence of your Innocence: She allows you a good Table, but not that your Neighbours fame shou'd be the Salt to every Meat, and every thing taft insipid, which do's not relish of the Satyr. *Philothea* did not so. Why do you corrupt your lawful Diversions into criminal excesses? your Apparel into a subject of Vanity, and occasion of Scandal? and turn those Riches into *Oftentation*, which ought to be *bid in the bosom of the poor*, if you wou'd either preserve your Innocence, redeem your offences, or perfect your Sanctity. And this was the Practise of *Philothea*. In a word, *decebat ut talis esset*, so fitting and even so necessary was it to all states and conditions, that when *Vice* began to establish his Throne upon the ruins of *Piety*, when *Relaxation* invaded the Rights

Rights, and Usurped the Title of *Religion*, when Vertue was Pictured like a fury, with Scourges in her Hands, and was as much apprehended as she was before neglected, so fitting and even so necessary, I say, it was the Divine providence should shew such a Bishop to the World, whose Authority might convince an incredulous Generation, and whose Example might encourage the weak, whose meekness might soften the most obdurate, whose advices might strengthen the languishing hand, and inspire the dejected heart; and in fine, whose pathetick Exhortations might melt down the Heart of stone, and fetch Waters out of the hardest Rock; when he teaches us both by *Word* and *Example* that the way to Heaven, is neither so craggy nor so steep as the descent of Hell: that you may climb the one with less pains then plunge down the other: that there are pleasures attending Innocence to which the most indulged Appetites can never arrive; that Vertue has more Charms then Vice;

Vice ; that Sanctity is but high Reason, and when you live like Gentlemen you commence Saints. For what can be so reasonable as to live *soberly, justly, and piously in this World?* What more gentle? What more sordid and base then the contrary Vices? Yet in these Three Heads our Saint after St. *Paul* summs up all your Obligations, renders them familiar by his Practice, and softens them in his instructions.

Here the Bishop learns how to support with ease, the formidable burthen of his charge ; the *Ecclesiastick* to perform the Duties of his Character ; the *Religious* to maintain the Innocence of his Life ; and the *Secular* Man experiences the facility of Virtue : The *Great*, and the *Rich* are taught the advantage of their condition, by having the power to do good to others ; a Godlike capacity : The *Virgin* is instructed how to secure that *great Treasure*, an Angelical purity : The *Married Person* has methods laid down, how to extract

extract Antidotes out of Poyson, and as Fish live in Salt-water without drawing the Brine, so to converse in the great Sea of the World, without taking in either its Vanities or Corruption.

i.e.  
St. Francis  
Sales's ad-  
mirable  
treatise of  
the Love of  
God.

If you be a Man, you have a *Theotimus* for your Pattern; a *Philothea* if you be a Woman; if you aspire to perfection, what better guide can you chuse then his *love of God* which rises every line till it lose both the Reader and it self in an Ocean of Charity, till it plant the imitator in the Third Heaven? If you cannot follow so great a flight, despone not; you have his *Introduction to a Devout life*, so accommodated to all Capacities and Conditions, that we may without Impiety apply to it what St. *Gregory* said of the holy Scripture, *ubi agnus ambulat, & Elephas natat*, where the Lamb walks and the Elephant swims; the more simple Reader is satisfied, and the more elevated understanding is transported. If you are unsettled in matters of Religion,

Religion, read his *Triumph of the Cross*, and you will sit down abundantly contented, and more than sufficiently convinced. If the care of others be committed to you, what so moving as his *Sermons*? What so persuasive as his *Instructions*? Smooth as the profound current, perspicuous as the shallow, resembling the Nile flowing with sweetness, and fecundity, but comparable only to themselves.

If you want spiritual comfort or advice, let his *Entertainments* and *Letters* be your Counsel, which solve every emergent difficulty, dispel every scruple, satisfie your doubts, and set the most perplext cases in the clearest light.

To conclude, as out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh; so out of the Innocence and Sanctity of his Life, he Copied his Instructions. His Writings are his Obelisk, his own Panegyrick: and if you imitate them they are yours too,

D if

if you desire to imitate they are most excellent directions; but if you will not they are your Sentence and Condemnation.

For is it not as much your duty to embrace *Innocence*, and to press forward to *Sanctity*? Is it not as much your Interest? Have you not the same Capacity, the same Encouragements, and Assistance? Do you want either Liberty or Grace? Neither. Do you want Knowledge, or Instruction? You cannot pretend it: But if you want Will, and Application, who can you blame, but your selves? *Perdition tuæ exte O Israel*; if you fall, you cast your selves down the precipice; if you perish, it is by your own hands; *Why will you die O House of Israel?* for your perdition is from your selves.

Our B. Master assures those who tread the paths of his *Sanctity* and *Innocence*, that at their Journeys end, they shall repose upon Thrones, and sit judging the Tribes

*Tribes of Israel*; not by pronouncing sentences of death upon them, says St. *Jerom*, but by making it evident to all mankind by the comparison of their Lives, that such as wou'd not follow the tract they had beat and smoothed with their own feet, shou'd have nothing to say for themselves, why judgment might not pass upon their convicted crimes, *quia vobis creditibus illi credere noluerunt*:

And it is worth our serious and timely study to consider what Plea we shall be able to make, at the severe Tribunal against such a cloud of Witnesses, the Lives of so many Saints that will appear against us. Perhaps we were Ignorant of our Obligation: And have you not the same Law written in your Hearts, as you are Men, and the same Gospel Preached unto you, as you are Christians, And both the one, and the other revived and inculcated by their instructions, shewn to be practicable, and even easie by their Example? If it be true that *qui*

D 2      *ignorat*

*ignorat ignorabitur*, he that is wilfully unknowing in the great concern of his Salvation, shall not be acknowledged for a Disciple of Christ; he that neglects to learn either out of sloath or prejudice, or temporal interest, is wilfully Ignorant; he that shuts his Eyes against the Light, is as criminal as he that Rebels against it, and deserves as severe Chastisement.

But I cou'd not practice what I knew.  
*Erubescere Sidon ait Mare*, cover your Face that the World may not see you blush at such a childish and unmanly Excuse. Were not they of as noble a Birth, of as tender a Complexion, of as nice an Education? Had not they the same Passions to bridle, the same Concupiscence to war against, the same Body of Sin to conquer? But they had Grace. And how often has it been given you? How often have you scornfully rejected it? Have you not the same supernatural Light, the same holy Inspirations? The same efficacious Sacraments? As winning Examples,

bles, as Pathetick Exhortations, as vigorous both interiour and exterior Helps, *What cou'd I do to my Vineyard that I have not done?*

But I have pressing Avocations, a tide of busines, an Estate to raise, a Child to Marry, a Law suit to follow, a Family to provide for; and in fine such impediments as no body can imagin, and I cannot overcome. And are these the heads of your Excuses? Are these your particular Difficulties? Why? They are every bodies *Song*, a meer *Narrative* which is in every bodies Mouth, and which the floathful Man in the *Proverbs* delivers more compendiously, *Leo est in via, There is a Lyon in the way.* But they are so far from proving what you intend, an exemption from Holines, and Innocence, that they are convincing Arguments you stand in greater necessity of practising those Vertues, and *walking carefully*, (as the Apostle speaks) because you go upon a slippery pavement. They are Arguments indeed why you cannot

Caute Ambulare.

*renounce*

*Conyngton*

renounce the World, and bury your selves in a *Cloyster*; but do not prove at all that you cannot live Innocent in the World. You cannot estrange your selves from Creatures; but cannot you with-hold your affection? You cannot support great corporal Austerities; but cannot you keep the Rein upon your Appetites? You cannot spend whole days in Contemplation; but cannot you set apart an hour for Prayer? You cannot observe perpetual Silence; But cannot you refrain from broaching, or dispersing Scandal? Cannot you moderate the flippancy of your Tongue? You cannot distribute all your Goods to the Poor; but cannot you relieve their necessities out of your superfluities?

You cannot suppress the eruptions of your Passions; but you may keep a watch over them. You cannot contain from Pleasures that are lawful; but you may abstain from the unlawful. You cannot depose the grandure of your Condition,

Condition, nor quit the lustre of your State ; but you may keep within the bounds of Christian modesty , and abstain even from the appearance of Evil , as the Apostle commands.

This is the Summary of the Doctrine of our Saint , the Spirit of his Writings, the Sweetness of his Spirit : And how rigorous soever he was to his own Person, he commands me to tell you, if you practise these easie Instructions , you shall enjoy Innocence in the midst of Corruption ; Holiness in the midst of Infirmities ; Poverty in the midst of Riches ; and Peace in the midst of Distractions ; *vade & nesci* *similiter*. But for your encouragement to believe, what your own experience can only perswade , It was fitting we shou'd have such a Bishop , Holy and Innocent , whose Holiness, tho' attested by unquestionable Miracles, yet in so corrupt an Age, his Innocence was the greatest Miracle. And if he that lives.

lives well (as St. Augustine assures us) can-  
not die ill ; he that lives *Innocent*, can-  
not but die *Holy* ; And therefore on the  
Feast of the *Holy Innocents*, he was call'd  
to the nuptials of the Lamb, and  
added to their Number. *A Martyr of  
Love* ; *an indefatigable Pastour* ; *the Apo-  
stle of his Country* ; *the Mirrour of Chasti-  
ty, Humility, Patience, and of all the gen-  
tile Train of peaceful Vertues* ; *the very  
Manna which Heaven rain'd down upon this  
Age, savory and delicious to every Pallate  
that has any Taste of Devotion* ; *and to con-  
clude his Elogium, the Holy Innocent of  
the declining Church, as the others were  
of the Infant Christianity* ; *the later Crop,  
as the others were the first Fruits, col-  
lected into the Garners of Heaven* : Whe-  
ther I beseech God that you may follow  
him, by a studious immitation of his  
Vertues, and an assiduous Lecture of his  
Writings ;

*In the Name, &c.*

*FINIS.*